

Polanki, Inc.

Polish Women's Cultural Club Newsletter

March [Marzec] 2015

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Happy St. Patrick's Day!!

Polanki Meeting March 13

The March Polanki general meeting will be held in the dining room of Villa St. Francis at 7:30 p.m.

SPEAKER: Anne Gurnack will speak about "How the Kashubs were evicted from Jones Island."

HOSTESSES:

Rachelle Ebenhoe
Deena Flemming
Devon Flemming
Nadine Flemming
Barbara Rutkowski
Shirley Sternig

The President's Pen

A new board was elected recently and I am humbled to serve as president, as I follow women who served in a way that has given the organization integrity and longevity. Serve is the operative word. Women who have served to guarantee that Polish culture is presented in the Milwaukee community.

Because of the Polanki members who generously support their organization, Polanki has and will continue to serve as a mainstay of community involvement; supporting other groups, participating in community events, and planning our own varied events.

Polanki volunteers make it possible to promote the Polanki mission, to serve the Polish community, and to serve each other.

Thank you to all members who have participated in so many ways: serving as board members, chairpersons, planning, creating, setting up, taking down, selling, building, sewing, crafting, archiving, cooking, baking, making salads, making soup, shelving books, working on the various committees,

picking up pierogi in Chicago, and the many, many tasks that are too numerable to list. Thank you for all of the time, talent, and resources that are given by our gracious Polanki women and friends. Our busy Polanki calendar needs all of these services. Please continue to volunteer as Polanki needs your time talent and most especially you.



Barbara M. Godlewski 1939-2015

Surrounded by the love of her family, Barbara M. Godlewski passed away at United Hospital System-Kenosha on January 31, 2015. She was 76 years old. Barbara was born in Netta Druga, Borsuka, Poland on January 1, 1939, the daughter of the late Zygmunt and Czesława Kowaleski. She was married in Częstochowa, Poland on July 24, 1957 to George T. Godlewski. In 1966, she moved to Racine and worked at St. Luke's Hospital, but eventually left to become a full-time homemaker.



Barbara was very proud of her Polish heritage and was affectionately known as the “Egg Lady” due to her talent in the folk art of Pisanki. She demonstrated her egg art at Polish Fest in Milwaukee annually and at other cultural fairs, and also taught her craft to others. Barbara kept honeybees and raised chickens and ducks, using the beeswax and eggs for her artwork. She was a member of Polanki, the Polish Women's Cultural Club of Milwaukee-since April, 2000. She was also a member of the Polish Heritage Alliance; and, as president of the Polish National Alliance, Local Lodge #1939, organized a Polish Heritage Picnic each August. In her spare time she enjoyed growing flowers, gardening, sewing, and baking her special treats for others. Above all, she loved being



with her family.

Barbara will be extremely missed by all her friends in Polanki.

An Amazing Life

by Alena Wadzinske

My Babcia. The best grandma ever. An amazing person. A magnificent person. She grew up in Poland during World War II. In 1966 she immigrated to the US. If you haven't met Barbara Godlewski, you've really missed out. Why don't you read her story for yourself.

On January 1, 1939, in a small town called Netta in Poland, a baby girl named Barbara Godlewski was born. Netta, Poland, is a small town by the Wycig dla narciarzy river. Her mom was a teacher at the town school. Her father was the town's blacksmith. All of the family members farmed. Nine months later, on September 1, World War II started.

My grandma can't remember all the details about the war, but all the major things and some of the minor things she can remember. The things that she could recall, she told me about. Now, I can transfer these memories on to you.

My grandma would move more than once during the war, but most of the time during the war she was at her grandma's house. Before her family moved to her grandma's house, they lived in Netta with ten families per house. The other houses were occupied by soldiers. All the shops closed down, some failing in business, others being forced to close. Then her parents decided to make the journey from Netta to

Barglow to live with her grandma. The journey was about three kilometers. When they arrived, all the tall buildings were being torn down, because they were an easy target for bombers.

A day or so later my grandma was neatening up her bedroom when a brick came flying through the window., It was from a steeple that was being torn down about 900 feet away. Since the window was completely shattered with no hope of repair, they covered the window with cardboard because glass was too expensive.

Later German soldiers were occupying most of the house. She, her parents, her two sisters, and her grandma only were able to keep two of the bedrooms for their own. The Nazis would use their kitchen and stove for cooking for the other soldiers. My grandma recalls always being very hungry, but scared to ask the Nazis for food. They ate mostly beans, potatoes, and they got one loaf of bread every week. They (her family) were always very hungry with little to eat everyday. Sometimes, when they were desperate for food, they would steal it from the Nazis.

Once, on a Christmas during the war, her family provided hospitality to the Nazis. . . She, her mom, her sisters, and her grandma were all bustling about to serve the soldiers. While her mom was cooking, she said some really bad things in Polish about the German soldiers. When the dinner was done, and some of the soldiers were leaving, a soldier came up and said to my grandma's mom, "Be careful what you say, because most of us soldiers can understand Polish too." (This is because some soldiers are Polish and the German language is similar to the Polish language.) Her mom turned red in the face and stuttered an apology in embarrassment. The soldier didn't do anything else, just left.

Another time, on New Year's Eve, a Nazi brought their family a quart of milk. Milk was very scarce during the war. To you, I bet milk would be nothing special. But to my grandma, who hadn't had milk in four years, it was a big thing, especially on the day before her birthday. The soldier that brought the milk to them was Polish, but was forced to fight for the Nazis. They split up the milk between the family, but not evenly. The parents and grandma took hardly any, so the kids could have more of the milk.

Soon after New Year's, bombs started coming. The Russians were bombing Poland, because that's where lots of the Nazis were. They stayed on and off in a bunker to try to stay safe from the bombs. . . They stayed in the bunker about 70% of the day. There were more than one hundred people in the bunker. Most of the people in the village used the same bunker, because there was only one in the village. The bunker stank like mold and rotten potatoes. Then bombs started dropping constantly at least once a day somewhere nearby. The last time my grandma was in a bunker, it was for three days straight. On the third day, a Nazi soldier came to the bunker, much to everyone's surprise. The Nazi said, "We're leaving, goodbye." He then fled from the area. Slowly and hesitantly, the people in the bunker started to exit, only to see Russian troops marching in proudly. They were wearing white uniforms, (well, once white) spattered with blood and dirt. All around them people started to cry and cheer, overwhelmed with the events. The Russian soldiers took over, and everyone was happy, if not, happier.

My grandma recalls hospitalizing lots of Russian soldiers. Her mom treated every soldier nicely and very well, because she had three brothers in the war, so they always had a lot of soldiers over at their house. My grandma helped wash the Russians uniforms and helped her mom and grandma cook the Nazis leftover food for the Russians. For my grandma, all these soldiers in her house was a bit overwhelming. They were very young, though, seventeen to twenty average. It took a lot of courage to speak to them, because she was very shy and was used to keeping to herself. . .

After the war they stayed at my grandma's house. My grandma would end up spending the rest of her childhood to early adult years in Barglow. They never went back to Netta, because the village was demolished. After the war, her mom didn't continue teaching at the village school. Her dad, though, was still a blacksmith, and now also helped people fix up their houses, windows, and barns.

My grandma recalls after the war not having her dad home a lot, because he was often out traveling to help repair people's things. For payment her dad often came home with odd things people still had after the war, because no one had any money. My grandma and her sisters were always eager to see what odd thing he would come home with, maybe for them. He often came home with milk, chickens, wheat, butter, cheese, oats, anything really. Most of the time, though, he came home with fabric or salt. One very special occasion, he came home with a few ounces of gold. . . Most of the time, though, it was no money, just trading

Soon after, the village stores opened again and started selling their goods. When she was five years old, she had sugar for the first time. That was when she realized life wasn't always war. It wasn't always hardship and hiding. You could have fun and run around and scream your lungs out.

Barglow was a very pretty place to live and was near the Masurian Lakes. In this village everyone knew each other, like a huge family. Everyone was very forgiving and helpful; and when you needed help, you would just holler down the road.

When she was seven, she started going to school again. During the war, she got home schooled by her mom. First she was in first grade, but only for a few weeks. The teacher told her that she needed to move up to second grade, because she was way ahead of everyone else in the class. So she did, but she didn't stay there long either. Soon she was in third grade. . . The school was tiny, seven grades in one classroom. You could hear what the other kids were learning, and it was hard to concentrate. To write, you dipped a pen in ink, then put the pen on the piece of paper. It was always very messy, and she was often scolded for spilling her ink.

In school she liked science a lot. They would grow mold and look at things through a microscope. Even when she was in fifth grade there still wasn't a lot of supplies for the school. They only had one poor microscope for the entire school. They didn't have lots of tools after the war, or any modern technology.

For fun my grandma would sew clothes for her dolls from scraps of fabric. Sometimes she and her friends would take wet pieces of cement and stick pretty rocks or pieces of glass in them, so they would dry in a pretty design. Most of the time, though, she and her friends would work in the fields. Her family planted a lot of tobacco, so they always had a lot of work to do. She carried buckets of water, planted, weeded, and hoed the field. The chore my grandma hated the most was spinning wool. It was slow hard work that made your fingers raw and scratched.

When she was growing up, she had no TV or radio, and no electricity either. In her house there were a few small kerosene lamps, and their heat was the fire. At night her dad would whittle, and the girls would sew or knit. My grandma was able to make mittens by the time she was seven and started sewing even earlier. Most nights they would sit by the fire and tell stories and sing songs. Her dad always had wonderful stories to tell. If they were really lucky, at night they would play cards. They would play games with their mom, dad, or both. The games helped improve their math and logic skills.

When she was older, her job in Poland was the village nurse. There was a village nurse because in Poland people didn't like to go to the hospital. If someone was hurt, they would ride their bike over to her house

and tell her what happened. Then she would ride her motorcycle to where the incident was. She could give shots, medications, bandage up wounds, and splint bones.

My grandma met my grandpa at church. He rode his bike to church and parked the bike at her front porch. They always chatted with each other, often on the way to church. They went to a few dances together. Eight weeks later, in 1954, my grandma and grandpa married.

In the year of 1965, my grandparents pondered the idea of going to the U.S. The is because they heard the U.S. was a nice and peaceful place to raise children without any civil wars. In Poland there were often civil wars with either Russia or Germany. Often these wars were over land or disagreements with the government. They were also pondering the idea because after World War II there were a lot of rough spots in Poland. Few pretty and peaceful places were left, because most were being rebuilt. The U.S. was a better place to raise a family with freedom and no wars.

In July of 1965, my grandpa left for the U.S. on a boat. In that time, going on a boat was as risky as going on a plane. The journey was very rough and difficult. Many people died, but not my grandpa! He was weakened over the journey, but still healthy enough to work. By 1966, he had made enough money for my grandma, my aunt and my uncle to fly over.

On February 19, 1966, my grandma and her two children (now my aunt and uncle) came over to the U.S.

When she first came to the U.S., some people were very rude to her because she messed up when talking all the time. Others, though, helped her along the way. A good example is when my grandma went to get a driver's license. They would not give her the driver's test because she couldn't speak English well enough and told her to come back when she could. When she came back the next day, a different officer was there, and he gave her the test. She passed, and got her driver's license, although it was after a few misunderstandings.

Her hobbies were mainly knitting, cooking, and sewing. Both in Poland and in the U.S., people would give her yarn and tell her what type of design and sweater they wanted. For extra income when my grandpa had a period of sickness for three years, she also made and sold purses in the U.S.

When she got to the U.S., she took English classes every week for two hours. After a year she was able to speak English fluently. Before that, though, she carried an English/Polish dictionary. A lot of times when she learned a new word, she would look it up in the dictionary, practice pronouncing it right, then try to use the word frequently in sentences. When she was able to speak English fluently, she started working in a medical place where she packed medicines and filled out medicine forms.

Eventually she retired and decided to give the rest of her life to crafts and farming. She raises chickens and eggs, as well as bees and honey. She does an egg painting with wax and dye called Pisanki, a Polish tradition. She is the one that taught me how to knit and sew and also taught me how to do Pisanki.

. . . I hope you now know much more about the person I call Babcia—an amazing person.

Poland under Glass 2015

After a year's hiatus, Polanki again sponsored "Poland under Glass" at the Milwaukee County Domes. Thank you to all the volunteers who made this event a huge success. 2,764 people enjoyed the food, crafts,

music, dancing, cooking demos, items for sale, and, yes, learning their name in Polish. Thanks to Louise Cieslak for translating. This year we even had royalty added to our event. Denna Flemming graced us by portraying Queen Jurata with Ruth Raczka telling Polish Folk Tales. Perhaps next year the royal entourage can grow. Special thanks to the volunteers who spent all day at the Domes interacting with folks including: Jane Dunn, Sandy Je T'aime, Heddy Moskaluk, Valerie Lukaszewicz, and Jean Wroblewski. And a huge shout out to the demonstrators including Kasia Drake-Hames, Jolanta Drake, Margie Hess, Diane Holytz, Bernie Jendrzeczak, Ryszarda Klim, Susan Konecny, Charlie Neuman, and Kathy Wieczorek, who not only spent all day at the Domes but worked on their crafts at home so that they could share their skills. Artists included Jerry Moskaluk, Danuta Zarek, and Teresa Rozanacki.

Home made pierogi and kielbasa are no longer a mystery due to the enjoyable and instructive cooking demonstrations by Anne Wal and Michael Krass. The products were also appreciated.

St. Max. Kolbe Saturday School choir entertained in the Show Dome in the morning. Syrena and Syrenka Polish Dancers performed in the afternoon in the lobby and dazzled everyone with their polished steps and beautiful costumes..

Due to the Green Market in the Domes' addition, parking was a challenge. I guess that is the price we pay for success. Some of our high numbers were probably helped by the customers at the market looking into "Poland under Glass." If so, we hope that they enjoyed it and learned a bit about Polish culture. Next year's event is on January 23, 2016. We will know that car pools and early arrival will be a good idea.

Save the date: January 23, 2016, for our fourth annual "Poland under Glass."





Photos taken by Jean Wroblewski.



3/04 Sophie Bruskiewitz
 3/09 Barbara Bojarski
 3/19 Joanna Nowakowski
 3/28 Marjorie Piechowski
 3/29 Hedy Rabiega
 3/31 Edith Malson

Get Well Wishes to

Active member Vera Buczkowski who fell and is hurting; and

Sustaining member Hedy Rabiega who had a second cataract surgery.

Coming Events

March 22 Pierogi Festival, PCW
 April 26 Awards Tea, PCW, 2 p.m.
 June 12-14 Polish Fest

Oct. 11 Soup Festival, Norway House
 Nov. 20-22 Holiday Folk Fair
 Nov. 29 Tree decorating at PCW
 Dec. 6 Holiday Bazaar/Brunch, PCW
 Dec. 20 Polanki Christmas Party

Community Corner

Norway House Torsk Schedule:

Mar. 28, and Apr. 25

The Polish Center has a number of events coming up:

Feb. 20 **Fish Fries begin.**
 Mar. 15 **Spring Bazaar**
 Mar. 22 **The Ardiente Quartet—Sunday, 6:30 p.m.**
 April 5 **Easter Brunch**
 May 10 **Mother's Day Brunch**

Casimir Pulaski–Father of American Cavalry

Casimir Pulaski (Kazimierz Pułaski) is known for his contributions to American independence. He was known as the “Father of American Cavalry.” He was born in Warka, Poland, on March 4, 1747. His father was one of the founding members of the Confederation of Bar, which began in 1768 and took up arms against Russia, which controlled Poland at the time. After his father’s death, Casimir took over military command and his brilliance earned him an impressive reputation. However, it was not long before he was accused of being involved in a plot to kill the king and was forced into exile.

Pulaski traveled to Paris and met Benjamin Franklin, who enlisted him to help in the American Revolution in North America. He soon joined George Washington’s army. His first military engagement against the British troops was at the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777. After a dashing charge at Brandywine that allowed the American army to escape from the British, he was rewarded with a commission as brigadier general and the command of all American cavalry. In 1779 Pulaski and his troops broke the British siege of Charleston, South Carolina. He was then sent to Savannah in a joint campaign with French allies. Seeing the French attack failing, Pulaski went into battle to rally the soldiers and was hit by a shot from cannon. He died two days later (October 11, 1779) and was buried at sea. The United States Congress passed a joint resolution conferring honorary US citizenship on Pulaski in 2009, sending it to the president for approval. President Barack Obama signed the Bill on November 6, 2009.

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